

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PM-04 L-03 INR-07  
DODE-00 NSC-05 CIAE-00 OMB-01 /060 W  
----- 083110 /43

R 211545Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8942  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1970

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MARR MASS MCAP PINR BF US UK  
SUBJ: MENNELL ON BASES AND BOATS AGAIN

1. DURING MY INITIAL CALL ON HIM DECEMBER 20, BRITISH  
HIGH COMMISSIONER PETER MENNELL WASTED NO TIME IN PLYING  
ME WITH HIS SINGULAR VIEWS ABOUT THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS  
AND THE LINKAGE, IN HIS EYES, BETWEEN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS  
AND THE VOSPER BOATS FOR THE BAHAMIAN DEFENSE FORCE.

2. ACCORDING TO MENNELL ABOUT DOLS 10 MILLION "UP FRONT"  
IS NEEDED TO PAY FOR THE BOATS, WHICH ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION  
AND DUE FOR DELIVERY IN JUNE, AND FOR THE PURCHASE AND  
RENOVATION OF CORAL HARBOUR. HE SPECULATED THAT THE  
BAHAMIANS WOULD BE JUSTIFIED IN ASKING FOR A LUMP SUM  
PAYMENT FOR RETROACTIVE USE OF THE FACILITIES AND  
REMARKED THAT THEY HAD BEEN LOOKING CAREFULLY AT OTHER  
U.S. BASE NEGOTIATIONS (E.G. SPAIN). I REAFFIRMED  
OUR POSITION THAT THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR RETROACTIVE  
PAYMENTS IN THIS CASE AND NOTED THAT IT IS HIGHLY  
UNUSUAL FOR CONGRESS TO APPROVE SUCH PAYMENTS IN ANY  
CASE. I ALSO REITERATED THAT THERE COULD BE NO DIRECT  
LINKAGE BETWEEN OUR RENTAL PAYMENTS AND THE FINANCING  
OF THE DEFENSE FORCE, ALTHOUGH THE BAHAMIANS COULD, OF  
COURSE, USE OUR PAYMENTS ANY WAY THEY SAW FIT.  
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EM AS TO TIMING, MENNELL FELT THAT THE BAHAMIANS, WHO,  
HE SAID, PROBABLY EXPECT A MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE FROM  
THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, WOULD NOT GET BACK TO US  
UNTIL AFTER JANUARY 20 AND PROBABLY NOT UNTIL AFTER THE  
BAHAMIAN ELECTION. I EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THIS ASSESS-

MENT THAT THE PLP WOULD NOT WANT TO HAVE A SETTLEMENT IN HAND GOING INTO AN ELECTION, REMINDED HIM THAT, AT VERY LEAST, ANOTHER "EXTENSION" IS DUE BY DECEMBER 31 AND REITERATED THAT WE ARE IN NO HURRY AND CONTENT TO HAVE USE OF THE FACILITIES FOR FREE. THE DELAY, MENNELLN SAID WAS DUE TO THE BAHAMIANS' INABILITY TO FOCUS ON MORE THAN ONE ISSUE AT A TIME, ADDERLEY'S PREOCCUPATION WITH LAW OF THE SEA AND HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY. IT WAS "ILLOGICAL," HE CONCLUDED, FOR THE GCOB TO TALK ABOUT AN AGREEMENT REFERRING TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS, WITHOUT FIRST DEFINING WHAT THE COMMONWEALTH IS GEOGRAPHICALLY.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY BASES, NEGOTIATIONS, NAVAL SHIPS, MILITARY SALES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 21 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ElyME  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976NASSAU01970  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760468-0813  
**From:** NASSAU  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761224/aaaaauwi.tel  
**Line Count:** 74  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ElyME  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <19 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <15 SEP 2004 by ElyME>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** MENNELL ON BASES AND BOATS AGAIN  
**TAGS:** MARR, MASS, MCAP, PINR, BF, US, UK  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006